

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2263

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMCONSUL ADANA

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

AMCONSUL IZMIR

USMISSION USNATO

USMISSION USUN

CINCUSAFE

USCINCEUR

USNMR SHAPE

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR, TU, CY

SUBJECT: TURKEY REACTS STRONGLY TO SFRC VOTE

REF: ANKARA 822

1. TURKISH REACTION TO SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE (SFRC) ACTION ON MILITARY ASSISTANCE BILL HAS BEEN EXTENSIVE AND UNIFORMLY NEGATIVE. AS REPORTED REFTEL, PRIMIN DEMIREL RESPONDED TO THE SENATE ACTION BY SAYING THAT ANYTHING THAT IMPLIES A CONTINUATION OF THE EMBARGO WOULD HAVE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES FOR US-TURKISH RELATIONS. ADDITIONALLY, FORMER DEFENSE MINISTER AND PRESENTLY SPOKESMAN FOR
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FOREIGN AFFAIRS FOR THE OPPOSITION REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S

PARTY (RPP) HASAN ESAT ISIK WAS QUOTED BY THE PRESS
FEBRUARY 1 AS SAYING THAT IT WAS UNACCEPTABLE THAT ARMS
ASSISTANCE LEGISLATION BE TIED TO TURKEY'S CYPRUS POLICY.
HE SAID, "ALLIES MUST STOP TRYING TO CONTROL EACH OTHER'S POLICY."

2. FEBRUARY 1 GUNAYDIN REPORTED THE SFRC ACTION HAD CREATED
A STIR IN MILITARY CIRCLES WHICH ALSO REJECTED TYING US
ASSISTANCE TO TURKISH ACTIONS ON CYPRUS. CUMHURIYET
FEBRUARY 1 CARRIED A STORY CLAIMING CONSIDERATION WAS BEING GIVEN
TO POSTPONEMENT OF CAGLAYANGIL'S VISIT IN VIEW OF THE SFRC
ACTION. (GUNAYDIN FEBRUARY 2 CARRIES CONTRARY REPORT
SUGGESTING CAGLAYANGIL VISIT GIVES GOT CHANCE TO RESTATE
ITS CASE IN WASHINGTON.) NILUFER YALCIN IN AN ARTICLE IN
MILLIYET FEBRUARY 2 QUOTED GOVERNMENT SOURCES AS SAYING
THE SFRC ACTION AT THIS TIME IS NOT A PROBLEM FOR TURKEY
BUT RATHER FOR THOSE WHO WANT A NEW DEFENSE AGREEMENT AND
WANT THE BASES OPENED SOON.

3. EDITORIAL REACTION FEBRUARY 2 INCLUDED A COMMENTARY IN
CUMHURIYET WHICH CLAIMED THE SFRC ACTION WAS COMPLETELY
CONSISTENT WITH RECENT US FOREIGN POLICY DECISIONS. IT
SAID THE ARMS AND EQUIPMENT PROVIDED TURKEY BY
THE UNITED STATES COULD ONLY BE USED FOR THE ADVANCEMENT
OF AMERICAN INTERESTS. CUMHURIYET ALSO ATTACKED THE
DEMIREL GOVERNMENT AS BEING INCAPABLE OF DEFENDING THE
HONOR AND THE INTERESTS OF TURKEY. GUNAYDIN FEBRUARY 2
CHARACTERIZED THE SFRC ACTION AS ANOTHER FOREIGN POLICY
DEFEAT FOR TURKEY. YENI HALKCI (A NEW NEWSPAPER WHICH
APPEARS TO REPRESENT THE LEFT WING OF THE RPP) EDITORIALY
CHARACTERIZED THE SFRC ACTION AS IMPERTINENT. BRIEFING,
AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE WEEKLY DEVOTED TO POLITICAL AND
ECONOMIC ANALYSIS, HEADED ITS ARTICLE ON THE SFRC ACTION
WITH THE QUESTION, "A FATAL SETBACK?" THE ARTICLE SAID
CONGRESS WAS AGAIN RESORTING TO BULLYING TACTICS WITH
RESPECT TO TURKEY AND WAS THUS REPEATING THE SAME
MISTAKES IT HAD MADE BEFORE.

4. COMMENT: BECAUSE OF THE COMPLEXITIES OF THE AMERICAN
LEGISLATIVE CYCLE AND BECAUSE THE PRECISE DETAILS OF THE
SFRC ACTION HAVE NOT BEEN CLEARLY PRESENTED IN THE TURKISH
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PRESS, THE TURKISH RESPONSE SO FAR HAS BEEN A "GUT REACTION"
RATHER THAN A CONSIDERED ONE. NEVERTHELESS, PARTLY BECAUSE
IT IS AN EMOTIONAL REACTION, IT DOES, IN OUR VIEW, ACCURATELY
REFLECT TURKISH FEELINGS. TURKS, IN OR OUT OF GOVERNMENT,
UNIFORMLY CONSIDER ATTEMPTS BY THE CONGRESS TO INFLUENCE
TURKISH CYPRUS POLICY BY IMPOSING RESTRICTIONS ON ASSISTANCE
LEGISLATION AS UNWARRANTED INTERFERENCE IN TURKISH AFFAIRS.
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